

Current Statistics ♦ February 2009

- The province's unemployment rate leaped 0.8 percentage points higher to 6.1% in January (*seasonally adjusted*), the highest month-over-month increase in the jobless rate recorded since late 2001. Employment dropped 1.5%, representing a loss of 35,100 jobs as British Columbia continued to feel the pinch of the global economic downturn.

The goods sector took a drubbing in January as employment tumbled 6.9%. Manufacturers shed nearly one-tenth (-9.6%) while job losses continued in the construction industry (-4.8%). After two months of gains late in 2008, employment weakened in forestry, fishing & mining (-5.9%).

Service sector employment was 0.1% lower than the previous month. While the number of jobs grew in professional, scientific & technical (+4.6%), health care (+2.2%) and finance, insurance & real estate (+1.5%), these gains were offset by a drop in employment in industries such as transportation & warehousing (-4.3%) and trade (-1.9%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- Sawmills and planing mills in the province produced 16.6% less lumber in November than in the same month in 2007. Mills in the Interior slowed their output by 14.8%, while production at coastal mills was down more substantially (-29.5%). Canadian lumber production slipped 18.2%, due to significant downturns in all of the nation's lumber-producing provinces.

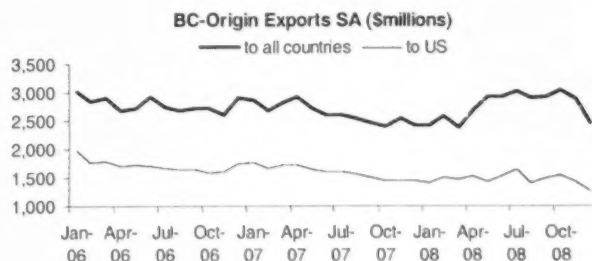
Data Source: Statistics Canada

- BC product exports dropped 14.8% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December, as shipments to the US (-11.7%) declined for the second straight month and exports to overseas destinations plummeted (-17.8%). Energy product exports to the US (-15.1%) and other countries (-22.7%) plunged, accounting for much of the overall decline. US-

bound forest product exports were also off substantially (-18.9%) in December.

Canadian exports slipped 9.7% to \$35.3 billion, as shipments to the US retreated 10.0%, with even stronger declines in exports to Japan (-13.3%). A notable increase in shipments to the European Union (+18.3%) was unable to offset the declines.

Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats



- Shipments of manufactured goods in British Columbia ended 2008 on an especially sour note, falling 8.7% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December, the largest monthly decline in more than seventeen years. Nearly every industry in the sector recorded declining sales, but the lion's share of the drop belonged to the beleaguered wood products industry (-19.4%), which saw another month of double-digit declines, as well as the non-metallic mineral (-30.2%) and primary metal (-29.0%) industries. Fabricated metals (-6.6%), machinery (-5.8%) and computer & electronics (-11.4%) makers registered back-to-back months of declining sales, while transportation equipment (-6.0%), which managed to inch ahead in the previous month, joined the ranks of producers who saw business shrink in December. All told, durable goods manufacturers experienced a 15.9% drop in shipments.

Despite the fact that shipments of paper products (+5.1%) recovered some of the ground

lost in the previous month, the weight of slower sales of plastics & rubber (-7.0%), beverage & tobacco (-1.0%) and food (-0.9%) products was enough to drive total shipments of non-durables (-0.3%) into its third straight decline. Nationally, shipments tumbled 8.0% in December.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Wholesale activity in British Columbia fell 6.1% (seasonally adjusted) in December, the largest month-over-month decrease recorded since April 2003.** Weaker sales in food products (-3.5%), machinery & equipment (-5.6%) and building materials (-3.1%) were largely responsible for the decrease while a sharp drop registered by wholesalers of lumber & millwork (-7.9%) and computer & electronic equipment (-14.3%) was also a contributing factor. Nationally, wholesale sales were off 3.4% in December with all ten provinces reporting a drop in activity.

Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **The value of building permits issued by BC's municipalities fell 40.9% (seasonally adjusted) in December, the fourth straight month of declines.** The value of residential building intentions continued to tumble, with a 42.6% drop in December. Non-residential permits issued were worth 39.0% less with a plummeting value for intended commercial projects (-50.3%) completely offsetting increases in the institutional (+30.8%) and industrial (+28.9%) sectors. The metropolitan areas of Victoria (-40.2%), Vancouver (-45.7%), Kelowna (-48.2%) and Abbotsford (-57.1%) all saw substantial double-digit declines.

Nationally, the value of permits issued was off for a third straight month (-3.9%) as both residential (-3.2%) and non-residential (-4.9%) sector plans were down.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Consumer prices in British Columbia rose 1.4% in January, a modest increase from the 1.2% registered in December, bringing to an end the slowdown in inflation begun in October.** While energy costs continued to fall (-7.4%), prices for food (+7.0%) remained on an upward trend, as grocery bills (+8.6%), especially for dairy products (+7.0%), fruits (+9.8%) and vegetables (+18.9%), continued to rise. Transportation costs, however, were down for the third straight month (-4.4%), the result of falling gasoline prices (-14.8%).

Canada-wide, the CPI rose 1.1% in January with lower prices for both gasoline (-23.5%) and motor vehicles (-3.2%) checking the upward pressure from increased food (+8.6%) and shelter costs (+3.3%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

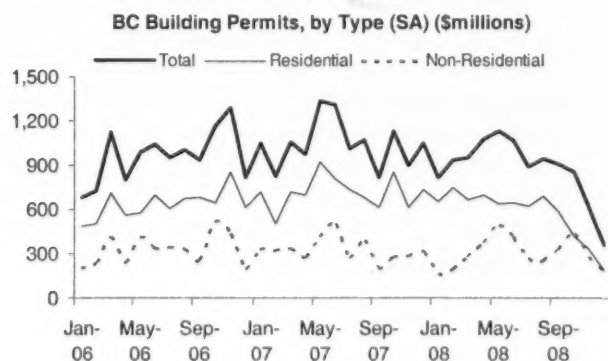
- **The number of housing starts in BC dropped (-21.6%, seasonally adjusted at annual rates) in January, wiping out the 8.5% increase recorded in December.** Nationally, housing starts were down 10.9%, with every province except New Brunswick (+26.7%) and Quebec (+3.0%) posting declines in new home building activity.

Data Source: CMHC

- **Retail sales in BC continued to slide for the third straight month, registering a 5.6% (seasonally adjusted) drop in December, the biggest monthly decline since December 1996.** Sales were down across the country with every province and territory posting a decrease from November levels.

Nationally, retail sales were down 5.4%, with significant decreases in the receipts of new car dealers (-15.1%), gas stations (-11.7%), computer & software stores (-7.3%) and home centres & hardware stores (-6.8%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada



MONTHLY STATISTICS

PRICES

Consumer Price Index-BC	2002=100	Jan '09	111.4	0.0	1.4	111.4	1.4
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	2002=100	Jan '09	112.0	0.1	1.6	112.0	1.6
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	2002=100	Jan '09	111.0	0.0	1.5	111.0	1.5
Consumer Price Index-Canada	2002=100	Jan '09	113.0	-0.3	1.1	113.0	1.1
Consumer Price Index-USA	1982-84=100	Jan '09	211.1	0.4	0.0	211.1	0.0
Industry Price Index-Canada	1997=100	Dec '08	117.4	-1.9	2.5	120.6	4.3

LABOUR

Unemployment Rate (SA)*-BC	Percent	Jan '09	6.1	(5.3)	(4.1)	6.1	(4.1)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-Canada	Percent	Jan '09	7.2	(6.6)	(5.8)	7.2	(5.8)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-USA	Percent	Jan '09	7.6	(7.2)	(4.9)	7.6	(4.9)
Unemployed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Jan '09	147.5	13.7	50.1	147.5	50.1
Employed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Jan '09	2,267.6	-1.5	-1.7	2,267.6	-1.7
Labour Force (SA)-BC	Thousand	Jan '09	2,415.1	-0.7	0.4	2,415.1	0.4
Participation Rate (SA)-BC	Percent	Jan '09	65.7	(66.2)	(66.7)	65.7	(66.7)
Regular EI Benefits Paid	\$Million	Dec '08	86.8	18.8	27.6	67.3	16.3
Regular EI Beneficiaries	Persons	Dec '08	60,400	26.4	36.1	45,436	11.8
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	Jan '09	799.72	0.4	3.6	799.72	3.6
Wages and Salaries-BC (SA)	\$Million	Sep '08	7,720.7	0.6	6.3	7,624.6	6.4
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC	1996=100	Dec '08	123.5	1.2	2.5	120.6	3.3

PRODUCTION - BC

Lumber-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Dec '08	1,608.6	-25.4	-25.1	2,349.3	-23.1
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Dec '08	325	26.0	-18.1	335	-14.8
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Dec '08	51	15.9	-5.6	51	-27.3
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Dec '08	141	-6.0	-11.9	158	-0.9
Coal-Tonnes	Thousand	Nov '08	2,248.0	11.1	-0.8	2,257.0	3.2
Oil-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Oct '08	112.5	-1.1	-7.4	112.3	-13.3
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres	Million	Feb '08	2,461.2	-14.4	0.6	2,667.8	4.7
Electric Power Generated	GW.h	Nov '08	5,307.8	-0.9	-14.7	5,368.0	-9.2
Manufacturing Shipments (SA)	\$Million	Dec '08	2,959.2	-8.7	-12.6	3,329.2	-6.9

GENERAL

Housing Starts-All Areas BC(SAAR)**	Thousand	Jan '09	18.1	-21.6	-50.3	18.1	-50.3
Housing Starts-USA (SAAR)**	Thousand	Jan '09	466.0	-16.8	-56.2	466.0	-56.2
Building Permits-BC (SA)	\$Million	Dec '08	358.1	-40.9	-65.9	878.2	-16.0
Residential-BC (SA)	\$Million	Dec '08	187.7	-42.6	-74.6	573.6	-20.1
Non-Residential-BC (SA)	\$Million	Dec '08	170.3	-39.0	-45.5	304.6	-7.1
Retail Sales (NAICS) (SA)-BC	\$Million	Dec '08	4,279.3	-5.6	-11.3	4,708.5	0.3
Wholesale Trade (NAICS) (SA)-BC	\$Million	Dec '08	4,149.0	-6.1	-4.6	4,397.3	-1.5
Tourism Room Revenues (SA)-BC	\$Thousand	Oct '08	162,711	2.3	-2.4	165,345	1.4
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Dec '08	41	36.7	7.9	38	-3.4
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Dec '08	683	-4.5	42.3	608	9.7
Incorporations-BC	Number	May '08	2,508	-8.2	-13.1	2,543	-2.3
Exports Originating in BC (SA)	\$Million	Dec '08	2,452.6	-14.8	1.3	2,760.3	5.0

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*SA indicates seasonal adjustment.

**SAAR indicates seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

Brackets () indicate that rates are shown instead of percentage changes.

ANNUAL STATISTICS

PRICES

Consumer Price Index-BC	2002=100	112.3	110.0	108.1	106.3	2.1	1.8	1.7
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	2002=100	112.8	110.2	108.0	106.0	2.4	2.0	1.9
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	2002=100	111.8	109.8	108.5	106.9	1.8	1.2	1.5
Consumer Price Index-Canada	2002=100	114.1	111.5	109.1	107.0	2.3	2.2	2.0
Consumer Price Index-USA*	1982-84=100	215.3	207.3	201.6	195.3	3.8	2.9	3.2
Industry Price Index-Canada*	1997=100	120.6	115.6	113.8	111.2	4.3	1.6	2.3

LABOUR

Unemployment Rate-BC	Percent	4.6	4.2	4.8	5.9	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployment Rate-Canada	Percent	6.1	6.0	6.3	6.8	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployment Rate-USA*	Percent	5.8	4.6	4.6	5.1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployed-BC	Thousand	111.6	100.0	109.6	132.9	11.6	-8.8	-17.5
Employed-BC	Thousand	2,314.3	2,266.3	2,195.5	2,130.5	2.1	3.2	3.1
Labour Force-BC	Thousand	2,425.9	2,366.4	2,305.1	2,263.4	2.5	2.7	1.8
Participation Rate-BC	Percent	66.6	66.3	65.7	65.6	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total EI Benefits Paid-BC*	\$Million	1,732.4	1,562.7	1,564.2	1,650.3	10.9	-0.1	-5.2
Regular EI Benefits Paid-BC*	\$Million	807.4	694.3	723.7	837.4	16.3	-4.1	-13.6
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	780.85	747.84	726.02	704.49	4.4	3.0	3.1
Wages and Salaries-BC*	\$Million	-	86,781.2	81,623.0	74,454.9	-	6.3	9.6
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC*	1996=100	120.6	116.8	112.8	109.0	3.3	3.5	3.5

PRODUCTION - BC

Lumber-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	28,191.6	36,677.3	41,050.7	41,012.9	-23.1	-10.7	0.1
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	4,021	4,717	4,736	4,932	-14.8	-0.4	-4.8
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	615	846	1,059	1,076	-27.3	-20.1	-1.8
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	1,899	1,917	1,960	1,877	-0.9	-2.2	4.4
Coal-Tonnes*	Thousand	-	25,941.0	23,161.0	26,718.0	-	12.0	-13.3
Oil-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	-	1,529.2	1,670.6	1,765.7	-	-8.5	-5.4
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres*	Million	-	31,658.2	35,291.7	31,892.8	-	-10.3	10.7
Electric Power Generated*	GW.h	-	72,217.0	62,021.4	67,811.2	-	16.4	-8.5
Solid Mineral Shipments	\$Million	-	5,671.6	5,990.6	4,924.8	-	-5.3	21.6
Farm Cash Receipts**	\$Million	2,550.6	2,415.6	2,288.6	2,372.5	5.6	5.5	-3.5
Manufacturing Shipments*	\$Million	39,983.5	42,929.5	44,943.9	42,983.8	-6.9	-4.5	4.6

GENERAL

Housing Starts-All Areas BC**	Thousand	34.3	39.2	36.4	34.7	-12.4	7.6	5.1
Housing Starts-USA	Thousand	906.2	1,355.0	1,800.9	2,068.3	-33.1	-24.8	-12.9
Building Permits-BC*	\$Million	10,557.6	12,544.7	11,541.5	10,182.9	-15.8	8.7	13.3
Residential-BC*	\$Million	6,902.2	8,611.7	7,620.7	6,970.8	-19.9	13.0	9.3
Non-Residential-BC*	\$Million	3,655.4	3,933.0	3,920.8	3,212.1	-7.1	0.3	22.1
Retail Sales (NAICS)-BC*	\$Million	56,483.8	56,365.4	52,837.1	49,286.3	0.2	6.7	7.2
Wholesale Trade (NAICS)-BC*	\$Million	52,897.1	53,547.7	49,328.3	45,447.4	-1.2	8.6	8.5
Tourism Room Revenues-BC*	\$Thousand	-	1,968.1	1,815.3	1,688.3	-	8.4	7.5
Business Bankruptcies-BC*	Number	454	470	587	786	-3.4	-19.9	-25.3
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC*	Number	7,293	6,651	7,022	8,179	9.7	-5.3	-14.1
Incorporations-BC*	Number	-	30,841	30,667	28,593	-	0.6	7.3
Exports Originating in BC*	\$Million	33,123.4	31,560.5	33,470.9	34,167.3	5.0	-5.7	-2.0
Capital Expenditures-BC	2009							
(\$Million)	43,317.6	46,689.2	42,669.6	39,912.2	33,254.2	9.4	6.9	20.0
(per cent change 2008-2009)	-7.2							
Population of BC (as at July 1)		4,381,603	4,310,305	4,243,580	4,196,788	1.7	1.6	1.1

* derived from monthly figures

**derived from quarterly figures

dash (-) indicates not available

n/a = not applicable

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ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

BRITISH COLUMBIA (Millions \$Cdn) Nov. 2008

Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices
Real Gross Domestic Product (chained 2002 \$)

CANADA (Millions \$Cdn) Nov. 2008

Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 2002 \$)

UNITED STATES (Billions \$US) **

Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 2000 \$US)

** US Department of Commerce (actual) July 2008

	YEAR				PERCENT CHANGE		
	2007	2006	2005	2004	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
BRITISH COLUMBIA (Millions \$Cdn) Nov. 2008							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	192,528	182,743	169,308	157,675	5.4	7.9	7.4
Real Gross Domestic Product (chained 2002 \$)	164,583	159,733	152,998	146,541	3.0	4.4	4.4
CANADA (Millions \$Cdn) Nov. 2008							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	1,535,646	1,450,490	1,372,626	1,290,906	5.9	5.7	6.3
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 2002 \$)	1,319,681	1,284,819	1,246,064	1,211,239	2.7	3.1	2.9
UNITED STATES (Billions \$US) **							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	13,807.5	13,178.4	12,421.9	11,685.9	4.8	6.1	6.3
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 2000 \$US)	11,523.9	11,294.8	10,989.5	10,675.8	2.0	2.8	2.9

INTEREST AND EXCHANGE RATES

(Source: Bank of Canada)

CANADA

Prime Business Rate
Bank Rate
Marketable Government Bond Rate (over 10 years)
Conventional Mortgages - 1 Year
- 5 Years

UNITED STATES

Prime Rate

EXCHANGE RATES

US Dollar
Japanese Yen
UK Pound Sterling
European Euro

Feb. 25/09	Feb. 18/09	Jan. 28/09	Feb. 27/08
PERCENT PER ANNUM			
3.00	3.00	3.00	5.75
1.25	1.25	1.25	4.25
3.70	3.59	3.74	4.14
5.00	5.00	5.00	7.25
5.79	5.79	5.79	7.29
3.25	3.25	3.25	6.00
AVERAGE NOON SPOT RATE			
1.2556	1.2596	1.2098	0.9778
0.0129	0.0134	0.0135	0.0092
1.7909	1.7926	1.7318	1.9480
1.5984	1.5804	1.6021	1.4795

FORECASTS

BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC Government (February 2009, Budget)
Central 1 Credit Union (January 2009)
Conference Board of Canada (January 2009)
Scotia Bank Group (February 2, 2009)
TD Bank (December 23, 2008)
CIBC WM Economics (February 17, 2009)
Global Insight (January 2009)

CANADA

TD Bank (February 4, 2009)
CIBC WM Economics (February 9, 2009)
Global Insight (February 2009)

UNITED STATES

TD Bank (February 4, 2009)
CIBC WM Economics (February 9, 2009)
Global Insight (February 2009)

Real GDP			Unemployment Rate		Consumer Price Index	
2008	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
% Change	% Change	% Change	%	%	% Change	% Change
1.0	-0.9	2.4	6.2	6.0	1.0	2.2
1.3	-1.0	2.0	6.7	7.5	0.8	1.3
1.2	1.8	3.3	5.4	5.1	2.2	1.8
1.3	-1.0	2.2	6.0	5.9	-	-
1.4	-1.0	3.6	5.3	6.0	0.4	2.8
1.5	-0.6	2.1	6.2	6.3	1.3	3.5
1.6	-0.3	2.7	5.6	6.0	1.1	2.2
0.6	-1.4	2.8	8.1	8.8	-0.3	1.4
0.6	-1.2	2.0	8.2	8.4	1.0	3.3
0.6	-1.8	2.5	7.9	8.3	0.2	1.8
1.3	-1.6	3.2	8.4	8.7	-1.1	1.6
1.3	-1.9	2.1	8.6	8.9	0.2	4.2
1.3	-2.7	2.0	8.7	9.4	-1.9	1.7

dash (-) indicates not available

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